Rahman Institute of Higher Education

Journal of Modern Psychology

# Research Paper: Predicting the Occurrence of Marital Conflicts Based on Forgiveness, Humor, and Emotional Intimacy

**Seyed Omid Sotoudeh Navroodi*[1], Tara Fallah ArjmandKhah[2], Noura Farokhi [3]**

[1] *PhD in Counseling, Consultant of Gilan Education Department, University Lecturer, Rasht, Iran*
[2] *Undergraduate Student of Psychology, Rahbord Shomal Institute of Higher Education, Rasht, Iran*
[3] *Master's Student of Psychology, Rahbord Shomal Institute of Higher Education, Rasht, Iran*

Citation: Sotoudeh Navroodi, O., Fallah ArjmandKhah, T., Farokhi, N. (2025). Predicting the Occurrence of Marital Conflicts Based on Forgiveness, Humor, and Emotional Intimacy. *Journal of Modern Psychology, 5(4)*, 14-29. https://doi.org/10.22034/jmp.2025.548679.1145

https://doi.org/10.22034/jmp.2025.548679.1145

Article info:

Received date:
22 Jul. 2025
Accepted date:
16 Sept. 2025

**Keywords:**
Emotional Intimacy,
Forgiveness, Marital Conflicts,
Sense of Humor

## Abstract

**Objective**: Marital conflicts negatively affect couples' emotional, communicative, and social functioning, ultimately leading to the deterioration of their relationships. This study aimed to predict the occurrence of marital conflicts based on forgiveness, humor, and intimacy.

**Methods**: The methodology was descriptive-correlational. The population included all women with marital conflict in Rasht, 150 of whom were selected by a convenience sampling method. Data were collected using the Marital Conflict Questionnaire (MCQ), Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAI), Humor Styles Questionnaire (SHQ), and Marital Forgiveness Questionnaire (MFS). Data analysis was performed using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient and stepwise regression analysis with SPSS-22 software.

**Results**: The findings showed that there was a negative and significant relationship between marital conflicts and forgiveness, humor, and emotional intimacy. Moreover, the results of regression analysis displayed that the predictor variables explained 22.6% in the first step, 30.4% in the second step, and 35.5% in the third step of the severity of marital conflicts ($P < 0.05$).

**Conclusion**: According to the findings, it can be concluded that by increasing forgiveness, humor, and emotional intimacy between couples, the severity of marital conflicts can be reduced.

*** Corresponding author:**
Seyed Omid Sotoudeh Navroodi
**Address:** Gilan Education Department, University Lecturer, Rasht, Iran
**Tel:** +98 (911) 7217833
**E-mail:** omid.sotodeh@yahoo.com

© 2025, The Author(s). Published by the Rahman Institute of Higher Education. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0)

## 1. Introduction

Marriage is the first and most important stage in the family life cycle, and success in other stages of life depends on success in this stage. Therefore, if couples have a healthy relationship and are free from marital conflicts, we can hope to create a healthy family and, consequently, a healthy society (Ventura-Leon et al., 2025). Typically, the first days of marriage are accompanied by a sense of commitment between the couple, but some couples gradually experience communication problems and marital conflicts (Dong et al., 2022). Therefore, the occurrence of conflicts in marital relationships is common and inevitable and can be considered one of the natural problems in every life together (Neumann, 2018).

Marital conflicts appear as a type of contradictory behavior between two married people, at least one of whom causes conflict. Typically, their emotional, communicative, and social functions are negatively affected, ultimately leading to the deterioration of their relationships (Zare-Mirakabad et al., 2024). Marital conflicts, in most cases, are the result of multiple factors such as personality differences, misunderstanding of needs and expectations, financial problems, and even external influences from culture and society (Lu et al., 2024). These conflicts can cause the formation of negative emotions such as distrust, anger, frustration, and emotional isolation, which, over time, lead to emotional coldness and distance between couples (Tawashi et al., 2023). Findings from various studies (Abbas et al., 2019; Makhanova et al., 2018) show that couples who experience more marital conflicts are not in a favorable state in terms of mental and physical health, and an increase in these conflicts is usually associated with higher levels of incompatibility in relationships and increases the likelihood of divorce (Cheung et al., 2022).

Creating and maintaining intimate relationships and satisfying emotional and psychological needs during marriage is a skill and art that, in addition to mental health and healthy early experiences, requires having logical attitudes and acquiring specific skills and tasks (Parsakia et al., 2023). Jurkane-Hobein (2015) believes that one of the major problems of couples in maintaining close relationships is their level of intimacy, and intimacy is an essential component of marital relationships that has been diminished today due to obstacles or social norms in married life. It is believed that following the emergence of problems in couples' lives, intimacy is an important factor for dialogue and communication and a kind of deterrent from further problems in couples (Blatterer, 2015). Intimacy includes spending time with the other person, listening to each other, having an honest relationship full of mutual trust, and, in other words, presenting oneself to one another verbally and non-verbally (Choi et al., 2020). Emotional intimacy is closeness, similarity, and a romantic or emotional personal relationship with another person that involves a deep understanding of the other person's thoughts and feelings and serves as a source of similarity and closeness (Yoo et al., 2014; Rahimi and Mousavi, 2020). Lack of intimacy in marriage causes psychosocial maladjustment, depression, and emotional disorders (Waring & Patton, 1984;

İyiaydın & Sümer, 2023). In other words, high marital intimacy is a positive factor that can increase emotional stability in both parties and act as a protector in their relationship (Lee et al., 2021). Research shows that unresolved conflicts, especially in the long term, reduce couples' emotional intimacy (Pratham et al., 2024). Ziroglu et al. (2023) also reveal in a study that couples who face high marital conflicts in their relationships are at serious risk of marital breakdown due to deep disorders in emotional and communication interactions. In addition, Ebrahimi and Banifatmeh (2014) found that the coldness of relationships and the decrease in intimacy between couples are mostly due to unfulfilled expectations between couples. Therefore, the more efficiently couples act, the better and more coherent their relationship will be, which will reduce marital conflicts (Bakhshi et al., 2012).

Another variable associated with marital conflicts is humor, which, as a positive trait, can play a role in reducing marital conflicts. Humor is an important factor in individual attractiveness in relationships between couples and increases the desire to have romantic and desirable relationships in couples (Hall, 2013). Humor can be a tool for communicating with others and reveals the deep feelings, beliefs, and desires of individuals. The role of humor in dealing with everyday stress, creating appropriate social relationships, facilitating the resolution of life problems, and also managing emotions and motivation is important (Wilbur & Campbell, 2011; Ziegler-Hill & Besser, 2013). Humor refers to the habitual differences of individuals in all behaviors, experiences, emotions, attitudes, and abilities related to entertainment, laughter, jokes, and the like (Martin, 2001). In recent decades, a sense of humor has been proposed not only as a highly socially desirable personality trait but also as an important component of mental health (Leon-Perez et al., 2021; Timofeiov-Tudose & Mairean, 2023). In addition to enhancing positive emotions and counteracting negative moods, humor seems to be a valuable mechanism for coping with stressful life events and an important social skill for establishing, maintaining, and enhancing appropriate interpersonal relationships (Martin, 2010). Mirseifi Fard et al. (2017) found that more humorous people are more likely to express their problems and try to reduce their sadness by supporting others in the face of everyday problems, which makes them enjoy interacting with others more and feel more effective. Humor enhances a spouse's attractiveness and helps to improve marital quality, but it can also cause problems or disconnection (McGee & Shevlin, 2009; Wilbur & Campbell, 2011; Barelds & Barelds-Dijkstra, 2010). Research has shown that accommodating humor styles in which respect for the other party is maintained are negatively related to marital conflict and positively related to marital satisfaction (Yip & Martin, 2006; Butzer & Kuiper, 2008; Cann et al., 2009; Saroglou et al., 2010).

Another way to reduce marital conflicts is to promote forgiveness in couples, which requires freedom from renewed and recurring anger and hostility, a lack of desire for revenge, and a decision to show compassion,

empathy, or regret for the offender (Akhtar et al., 2017). Forgiveness is a conscious and voluntary motivation that increases positive emotions and replaces negative emotions (Saffarian Tosi et al., 2018). Forgiveness in relationships among couples allows the continuation of the relationship despite mistakes, betrayals, or failures and brings couples closer together again. The result of such cohesion is increased satisfaction with marital life and a rational effort to resolve communication conflicts (Ahmadi Ardakani and Fatemi Oghada, 2019; Celik et al., 2022). Agu and Nwankwo (2019) believe that forgiveness in a marital relationship leads to the durability of marriage, improved communication performance, treatment of couples' psychological problems, and improvement of their physical health. In addition, based on the results of various studies, forgiveness can be related to marital relationship satisfaction (Fupšová & Záhorcová, 2022; Mendes-Teixeira & Duarte, 2021; Roberts et al., 2021).

Given the increasing concerns about family mental health and the important role of marital conflicts in the quality of life of couples, identifying the factors affecting the occurrence of these conflicts is of particular importance. Forgiveness, humor, and emotional intimacy are among the personality and behavioral characteristics that can play a protective role against the occurrence of marital tensions and conflicts. The present study aims to investigate the prediction of the occurrence of marital conflicts in women based on these three variables, which can help to understand the psychological mechanisms effective in the stability of couples' relationships more accurately and provide a scientific basis for providing psychological interventions and training. The necessity of this study is important because the results can pave the way for designing prevention programs and improving interpersonal skills in couples, and by providing reliable data, strengthen clinical and counseling decisions. In addition, addressing the role of humor and emotional intimacy, which have received less attention in domestic studies, will help enrich the country's research literature.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Population, Sample, and Sampling

The method of this study was descriptive correlational. The population included all married women in Rasht in the year 1404, from which 150 people were selected as a sample using convenience sampling. Finally, descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics, including the Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression, were used to analyze the data obtained in this study. All data analysis was performed using SPSS version 22 software.

### 2.2. Instruments

**Marital Conflict Questionnaire (MCQ):**

A self-report instrument consisting of 42 questions developed by Barati and Sanai (1996) based on clinical experiences in Iran to measure the nature and extent of marital conflicts. This questionnaire consists of 7 subscales, including: decreased sexual intercourse; increased child support; increased personal relationship with one's relatives; decreased personal relationship with spouse's relatives and friends;

separation of financial matters from each other; and increased emotional reactions. The maximum total score of the questionnaire is 210, and the minimum is 42. The options are scored on a 5-point Likert-type response scale (always, most of the time, sometimes, rarely, never). Barati and Sanai (1996) found Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total score of the scale to be 0.53 and for the subscales between 0.30 and 0.64. In the study by Lavaf et al. (2015), the reliability of the Marital Conflict Questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.72.

**Personal Assessment of Intimacy Questionnaire (PAI):**

The Personal Assessment of Intimacy Questionnaire of Shaffer and Elson (1981) is a 36-item instrument that measures intimacy in six dimensions: emotional, social, sexual, rational, recreational, and conventional on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). In the present study, the emotional intimacy subscale of this questionnaire was used. A higher score in this questionnaire indicates greater intimacy, and a lower score indicates less intimacy. Shaffer and Elson (1981) estimated the validity of the subscales of the Personal Assessment of Intimacy Questionnaire using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient method between 0.7 and 0.77, which was 0.75 for the emotional intimacy subscale. Khojasteh Mehr et al. (2016) also obtained the validity of the emotional intimacy scale using the Cronbach's alpha method of 0.63. Similarly, Shafer and Elson (1981) calculated the correlation coefficient of the Personal Assessment of Intimacy Questionnaire with the Self-Disclosure, Marital Adjustment, and Moos Family Context Questionnaires, and the obtained correlation coefficients indicated the desirable convergent validity of the questionnaire. Khojasteh Mehr et al. (2016) also calculated the correlation coefficient with regard to the Walker and Thompson Intimacy Scale to measure the validity of the questionnaire, and all coefficients were significant and indicated the desirable psychometric validity index of the questionnaire.

**Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ):**

The Humor Styles Questionnaire was used to measure humor. This questionnaire, developed by Khosouei et al. (2009), consists of 25 questions that were factor analyzed on a seven-point scale using the principal components method and Varimax rotation, yielding a five-factor structure (enjoyment of humor, laughter, verbal humor, humor in social relationships, and humor in stressful situations). In this questionnaire, each subject receives a separate score for each component or dimension and a final score for the entire questionnaire. A high score indicates greater humor. The total score for each subject in the entire questionnaire ranges from 25 to 125, and for each dimension from 5 to 25. Reliability, using Cronbach's alpha, was reported as 0.81, 0.80, 0.77, and 0.80 for self-promotional, bonding, aggressive, and self-defeating styles, respectively. Reliability using the test-retest method was also reported as 0.81, 0.85, 0.80, and 0.82 for self-promotional, bonding, aggressive, and self-defeating styles, respectively. Validity was also assessed by correlating the situational humor questionnaire with the self-

promotional, bonding, aggressive, and self-defeating styles, respectively, yielding 0.43, 0.27, 0.12, and 0.01, which showed a significant relationship at the $p < 0.01$ level in positive dimensions of humor, but no significant relationship was obtained in negative dimensions of humor. Similarly, the humorous coping style was found to be 0.53, 0.27, -0.28, and -0.26, respectively, with the self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating styles, all of which are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level.

### Marital Forgiveness Scale (MFS):

This scale was developed by Rye et al. (2001) and consists of 15 questions. Factor analysis of the scale revealed two factors: one factor includes items that indicate the absence of negative thoughts, feelings, and behavior toward the offender (negative absence, questions 1-10). The other factor includes items that indicate the presence of positive thoughts, feelings, and behavior toward the offender (positive presence, questions 11-15). Therefore, the present scale measures both negative and positive responses. The scale was originally developed to measure women's reactions to the wrongs they had seen in their romantic relationships; however, the questions were later modified to include all people and any type of wrongdoing. The scale is scored on a 5-point Likert scale. The scoring of questions (3, 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, and 14) is inverse. High scores indicate forgiveness, and low scores indicate a lack of forgiveness. Rye et al. (2001) reported Cronbach's alpha for the *absence of negative*, the *presence of positive*, and the entire questionnaire as 0.86, 0.85, and 0.87, respectively. In line with the convergent validity of the questionnaire, forgiveness was examined by comparing the scores obtained from this questionnaire with the Enright Forgiveness Questionnaire among 328 male and female students with an average age of 19 years, and a correlation of 0.52 to 0.75 was obtained. In Iran, the Cronbach's alpha of this test on 200 married female students of Tehran universities was 0.96, and the validity of this scale was also confirmed through correlation with the New Five-Factor Inventory, respectively, with neuroticism 0.45, with agreeableness 0.52, with extraversion 0.33, with agreeableness 0.42, and with openness 0.35. Zandipour et al. (2011). In the present study, the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha method was obtained for the subcomponents of absence of negative emotions, presence of positive emotions, and the total forgiveness scale as 0.75, 0.83, and 0.82, respectively.

## 3. Results

The research sample consisted of 150 married women living in Rasht. 66 (44%) were in the 25-35 age group, 52 (34.7%) were in the 36-45 age group, 23 (15.3%) were in the 46-55 age group, and 9 (6%) were over 55 years old. Correspondingly, the level of education indicated that 37 (24.7%) of the participants who pursued their studies hold a bachelor's degree or higher, 16 (10.7%) hold an associate's degree, 78 (52%) hold a bachelor's degree, and 19 (12.7%) hold a master's degree. The employment status of the women studied also showed that 93 (62%) were employed and 57 (38%) were housewives. Likewise, the study of the duration of marriage showed that 45 of the participants (30%) had been married for less

than a year, 56 (37.3%) for one to five years, 15 (10%) for six to ten years, and the remaining 34 (22.7%) had been married for more than ten years. 110 of the participants (73.3%) had no children, 18 (12%) had one child, and 22 (14.7%) had two children.

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation, minimum and maximum values, and skewness and elongation indices of the research variables.

Table1

*Mean and Standard Deviation of Descriptive Research Indicators*

| Component | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | Maximum | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Couple Conflicts | 34.44 | 1.52 | 9 | 147 | 1.64 | 1.30 |
| Humor | 109.04 | 2.20 | 52 | 158 | -0.30 | -0.42 |
| Forgiveness | 63.12 | 1.00 | 32 | 82 | -0.46 | 0.50 |
| Intimacy | 13.90 | 2.00 | 7 | 24 | 0.43 | 1.12 |

Table 1 showed that the mean and standard deviation for couple conflicts were 34.44 ± 1.52, humor was 109.04 ± 2.2, forgiveness was 63.12 ± 1, and intimacy was 13.90 ± 2. The skewness and kurtosis indices also indicated that these data were in a normal distribution. The correlation matrix of research variables is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Pearson Correlation Matrix to Examine the Relationship between the Occurrence of Marital Conflicts and Humor, Forgiveness, and Intimacy*

| Component | Couple Conflicts | Humor | Forgiveness | Intimacy |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Couple Conflicts | 1 | | | |
| Humor | -0.475**<br>0.001 | 1 | | |
| Forgiveness | -0.339**<br>0.001 | 0.233**<br>0.004 | 1 | |
| Intimacy | -0.361**<br>0.001 | 0.181*<br>0.026 | 0.072<br>0.384 | 1 |

*P<0.05 **p<0.01

The results of the Pearson correlation matrix revealed that there was a negative and significant relationship between marital conflicts and the indicators of humor, forgiveness, and intimacy (P < 0.001).

Stepwise regression analysis was used to examine the predictability of marital conflicts based on the variables of humor, forgiveness, and intimacy. The results of examining the normal distribution of variables and the assumption of independence of errors by the Durbin Watson test (Durbin Watson = 1.337) showed that the necessary statistical assumptions were met. A summary of the regression model for predicting marital conflicts is presented in Table 3.

Table 3
*Summary of the Regression Models for Predicting Marital Conflicts*

| Model | R | $R^2$ | Adjusted R | Standard Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.475 | 0.22 | 0.22 | 13.70 |
| 2 | 0.551 | 0.30 | 0.29 | 13.04 |
| 3 | 0.596 | 0.35 | 0.34 | 12.59 |

The summary results of the regression model showed that humor, forgiveness, and emotional intimacy predict the marital conflicts of the women studied during the three steps, as well as the R2 value showed that 22.6 percent in the first step, 30.4 percent in the second step, and 35.5 percent in the third step of the level of marital conflicts of women can be explained based on the predictor variables. Table 4 presents the results of the analysis of variance to test this model.

Table 4
*Results of Analysis of Variance to Predict Marital Conflicts Based on Predictor Variables*

| Steps | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8113.96<br>27804.99<br>35918.96 | 1<br>148<br>149 | 8113.96<br>187.87 | 43.18 | 0.001 |
| 2 | 10915.55<br>25003.40<br>35918.96 | 2<br>147<br>149 | 5457.77<br>170.09 | 32.087 | 0.001 |
| 3 | 12758.82<br>23160.14<br>35918.96 | 3<br>146<br>149 | 4252.94<br>158.63 | 26.81 | 0.001 |

The results of the analysis of variance showed that humor, Forgiveness, and Emotional Intimacy predict the reduction in marital conflicts over three steps. Table 5 presents the results of the standardized and unstandardized coefficients entered into the model.

Table 5
*Standardized Coefficients were Entered into the Model to Predict Marital Conflicts of the Women Studied*

| Steps | | B | Standard Error | Beta | T | Significance Level | VIF | tolerance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Humor | -0.304 | 0.046 | -0.475 | -6.572 | 0.001 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| 2 | Humor | -0.271 | 0.045 | -0.424 | -6.056 | 0.001 | 0.967 | 1.034 |
| | Intimacy Emotional | -1.467 | 0.361 | -0.284 | -4.058 | 0.001 | 0.967 | 1.034 |
| 3 | Humor | -0.237 | 0.044 | -0.371 | -5.349 | 0.001 | 0.919 | 1.089 |
| | Intimacy Emotional | -1.430 | 0.349 | -0.277 | -4.096 | 0.001 | 0.966 | 1.035 |
| | Forgiveness | -0.361 | 0.106 | -0.233 | -3.409 | 0.001 | 0.945 | 1.058 |

Marital conflicts = 102.98 (constant) -0.237 (Humor) -1.430 (Emotional Intimacy) -0.361 (Forgiveness)

According to the t-value and significance level, it was determined that in the first step, humor, in the second step, the two variables humor and emotional intimacy, and finally, in the third step, humor, emotional intimacy, and forgiveness had the greatest contribution to predicting marital conflicts in the women studied.

## 4. Discussion

The present study was conducted to investigate the role of forgiveness, humor, and intimacy in predicting women's marital conflicts. The results of the Pearson correlation matrix showed that there was a significant negative relationship between marital conflicts and the indicators of humor, forgiveness, and intimacy. Correspondingly, the regression results showed that humor, forgiveness, and intimacy predicted the marital conflicts of the women studied in three steps, and the R2 value showed that in the first step, 22.6 percent, in the second step, 30.4 percent, and in the third step, 35.5 percent of the level of marital conflicts of women can be explained based on the predictor variables. The above finding was in accordance with the findings of previous studies (Abbas et al., 2019; Pratham et al., 2024; Ebrahimi & Banifatmeh, 2014; Wilbur & Campbell, 2011; Saroglou et al., 2010; and Yip & Martin, 2006). In explaining the above results, it can be stated that the family, as the most important social institution, plays a decisive role in the health of the individual and society, and any disruption in marital relations can challenge the functioning of the family. In families where there are marital conflicts, factors such as emotional intimacy, humor, and forgiveness can play a role as effective variables in predicting and reducing these conflicts. In other words, the existence

of emotional intimacy between couples increases empathy, reduces misunderstandings, promotes a sense of closeness and psychological security, and increases the ability of spouses to express emotions and solve common problems. Couples who have a higher level of intimacy tend to manage conflicts more constructively and are less likely to get caught up in negative cycles of interaction. The results of Yarigarravesh & Hosseinizadeh's (2022) study showed that there was a significant inverse relationship between intimacy and marital conflict, which means that as intimacy between couples increases, conflicts between them decrease. Similarly, Greeff & Malherbe's (2001) study indicated that emotional intimacy is directly related to increased marital satisfaction and reduced marital conflict.

Humor is a very important variable for understanding marital satisfaction, and couples can use it during stressful times in their lives to reduce tension and create moments of joy in conflict situations. The level of humor in couples can be an indication of how they manage marital conflicts. Couples who use humor positively and constructively are often better able to reduce tension and anticipate and manage conflicts. Conversely, a lack of humor or its negative use can be an indication of a greater likelihood of conflicts (Erickson & Feldstein, 2006). Humor can reduce tensions arising from conflicts and provide a basis for calm and effective dialogue. The results of the study by Fallah & Aboulghasemi (2015) showed that humor was significantly related to interpersonal conflict resolution styles in incompatible couples. Bakhshipour (2015) also showed in a study that accommodating humor styles have a negative correlation with marital conflict and some of its components, and there is no significant correlation between unaccommodating humor styles and marital conflict and its components.

According to the results of various studies, forgiveness has important benefits for health, well-being, and the quality of interpersonal relationships (Ghobari-Bonab et al., 2008; Karremans et al., 2003). Forgiveness helps couples overlook each other's mistakes and shortcomings and prevents the continuation of hostility. Research also shows that forgiveness is the foundation of a successful marriage and is an important element in the process of improving relationships after severe trauma. Forgiveness can also improve couples' communication performance and reduce negative emotions such as resentment, hatred, and anger (Fakouri-Ashkiki et al., 2023). The results of Fincham et al.'s (2006) study displayed that women who scored high on the forgiveness factor reported lower levels of conflict with their husbands. In this study, the reason behind the reduction in marital conflicts was the high number of couples, and since marital conflict is one of the components of family strength in the present study, the present study was in line with the research of Fincham et al. (2006).

Amanellahi et al. (2018) also showed that forgiveness had the ability to predict marital conflicts and that a high level of forgiveness plays a role in the lowest level of marital conflicts. In explaining the above results, it can be said that forgiveness, humor, and emotional intimacy are able to predict the

level of marital conflicts in women. Women who have a higher level of forgiveness can manage differences with patience and flexibility and prevent conflict from escalating.

The present study had some limitations. First, the use of self-report questionnaires can be affected by respondent bias. Second, the research design was cross-sectional, and it is not possible to examine causal and long-term relationships between variables. Third, the population was limited to married women, which makes it difficult to generalize the results to other groups. It is suggested that future research should conduct longitudinal and interventional studies to examine the real role of these variables in reducing marital conflicts. Besides, the use of qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, can reveal more dimensions of intimacy, humor, and forgiveness in marital relationships. In addition, designing training workshops in counseling centers to promote these skills in couples can play an effective role in preventing and reducing conflicts.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present study, this study has practical applications for family counseling and clinical psychology professionals and can help couples better manage marital conflicts and improve the quality of their relationships. Special attention should be paid to training and strengthening the skills of forgiveness, emotional intimacy, and humor in couples so that they can better manage everyday tensions and conflicts. Furthermore, this study can be a guide for designing prevention programs and targeted psychological interventions in families to increase mental health and marital satisfaction.

## Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the participants of this study for taking time out of their busy schedules to respond to the instruments and participate in this study.

## Conflicts of Interest

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with any organization. Also, this research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

## References

Abbas, J., Aqeel, M., Abbas, J., Shaher, B., Jaffar, A., Sundas, J., & Zhang, W. (2019). The moderating role of social support for marital adjustment, depression, anxiety, and stress: Evidence from Pakistani working and nonworking women. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 244*, 231-238. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2018.07.071

Agu S., A., Nwankwo B., E. (2019). Influence of religious commitment, intentionality in marriage, and forgiveness on marital satisfaction among married couples. IFE Psychologia: *An International Journal, 27*(2): 121-133. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-19190fbde4

Ahmadi Ardakani, Z., Fatemi Oghada, N. (2019). Examining the model of relationship between attachment styles and marital satisfaction: The mediating roles of forgiveness and empathy.

Medical *Journal of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, 62*, 15-25. https://doi.org/10.22038/mjms.2019.13910

Akhtar, S., Dolan, A., Barlow, J. (2017). Understanding the Relationship between States. Forgiveness and Psychological Wellbeing: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Religious Health, 56*(2), 450-463 450–463. https://doi.org 10.1007/s10943-016-0188-9

Amanelahi, A., Zarbakhsh, M., & Esmaeili, A. (2018). *Prediction of marital conflicts based on forgiveness and empathy among married women in the city of Dezful*. 18th Iranian Counseling Association Conference: Counseling and Health, Tehran, Iran. https://civilica.com/doc/859146

Bakhshi, P., Asadi, M., Kiani, …, Shiralipour, A., Ahmaddoost, H. (2012). The relationship between family functioning and marital conflicts among couples on the verge of divorce. *Knowledge & Research in Applied Psychology, 13*(2), 10–19. https://sanad.iau.ir/journal/jsrp/Article/533822?jid=533822

Bakhshipour, B. (2015). Humor styles and marital conflict in married college students. *Counseling Research & Developments, 14*(55), 23-39. http://irancounseling.ir/journal/article-1-150-en.html

Barati, T. Sanai, B. (1996). *Inventory marital conflict. Measures of family structure and marriage.* Tehran: The Institute's Bethat Publications. https://doi.org/10.22067/ijap.v6i1.13756

Barelds, D., & Barelds-Dijkstra, P. (2010). Humor in intimate relationships: Ties among sense of humor, similarity in humor, and relationship quality. Humor: *International Journal of Humor Research, 23* (4). 447–465. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294118805008

Blatterer, H. (2015). *Everyday Friendships: Intimacy as Freedom in a Complex World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513615619503

Butzer, B., & Kuiper, N. (2008). Humor use in romantic relationships: The effects of relationship satisfaction and pleasant versus conflict situations. *The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, *142* (3), 245–260. https://doi.org/10.3200/JRLP.142.3.245-260

Cann, A., Christine, Z., & Heather, D. (2009). Positive and negative styles of humor in communication: Evidence for the importance of considering both styles. *Communication Quarterly, 57* (4). 452–468. https://doi.org/10.1080/01463370903313398

Çelik, E., Çelik, B., Yavaş, Ş., & Süler, M. (2022). Investigation of marital satisfaction in terms of proactive personality, meaning in life, and offense-specific forgiveness. *International journal of psychology and educational studies*, *9*(1), 1-11.https://doi.org/10.52380/ijpes.2022.9.1.348

Cheung, A. K. L., Chiu, T., & Choi, S. Y. P. (2022). Couples' self-control and marital conflict: Does similarity, complementarity, or totality matter more? *Social Science Research, 102*, 102638. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2021.102638

Choi, S. Y., Kim, H. R., & Myong, J. P. (2020). The mediating effects of marital intimacy and work satisfaction in the relationship between husbands' domestic labor and the depressive mood of married working women. *International Journal of environmental research and public health, 17*(12), 4547. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17124547

Dong, S., Dong, Q., & Chen, H. (2022). Mothers' parenting stress, depression, marital conflict, and marital satisfaction: The moderating effect of fathers' empathy tendency. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 299*, 682-690. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2021.12.079

Ebrahimi, S., Banifatemeh, H. (2014). Emotional divorce and related factors in Naghadeh. Sociological Studies. *Sociological studies, 4*(8), 7-22. https://sanad.iau.ir/en/Article/957613

Erickson, S. J. & Feldstein, S. W. (2006). Adolescent humor and its relationship to coping, defense strategies, psychological distress, and well-being. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development, 37*(3), 25-271. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-006-0034-5

Fakouri Ashkiki M., Janbozorgi M., Khoramian F. (2023). Predicting marital satisfaction based on the attitude similarity, attitude familiarity, and values similarity of couples. *Journal of Family Research. 19*(1), 29-44. https://doi.org/10.48308/JFR.19.1.29

Fallah, F., & Aboulghasemi, A. (2015). *The role of humor in predicting interpersonal conflict resolution styles among incompatible couples*. First National Conference on Educational Sciences and Psychology, Marvdasht, Iran. https://civilica.com/doc/338498

Fincham, F. D., Hall, J., & Beach, S. R. (2006). Forgiveness in Marriage: Current Status and Future Directions. Fa*mily Relation Journal, 55,* 415 - 427. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2005.callf.x-i1

Fupšová, T., Záhorcová, L. (2022). Empathy and Humility as Predictors of Forgiveness towards One's Partner and Relationship Satisfaction in Young Adults. Studia Psychologica, 64 (3), 243-255. https://doi.org/10.31577/sp.2022.03.851

Ghobari-Bonab, B., Keyvanzadeh, M., & Vahdat-Torbati, S. (2008). The relationship between forgiveness and mental health among medical students. *Journal of Psychology and Educational Sciences, 38*(2), 167–180. https://www.magiran.com/paper/582239

Greeff, A. P., & Malherbe, H.L. (2001). Intimacy and marital satisfaction in spouses. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy, 27*(3), 247-57. https://doi.org/10.1080/00926230175025 7100

Hall, J A. (2013). Humor in Long-Term Romantic Relationships: The Association of General Humor Styles and Relationship-Specific Functions with Relationship Satisfaction. Western *Journal of Communication, 77*(3), 272-292. https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.201 2.757796.

İyi Aydın, A., & Sümer, Z. H. (2023). The mediational role of intimate partner acceptance and psychological maladjustment in the relationship between intimate partner control and marital adjustment. *Current Psychology, 42*, 1598-1608. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01468-2

Jurkane-Hobein, I. (2015). Magining the Absent Partner: Intimacy and Imagination in Long-distance relationships. *Innovative Issues and approaches in social sciences, 8*(1), 223-225. https://doi.org/10.12959/issn.1855-0541.IIASS-2015-no1-art13

Karremans, J. C., Van Lange, P. A. M., Ouwerkerk, J. W., & Kluwer, E. S. (2003). When forgiving enhances psychological well-being: The role of interpersonal trust. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(5), 1011-1026. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.5.1011

Khojasteh Mehr, R., Ahmadi, A., Sodani, M. & Shir Ali Nia, Kh. (2016). Effectiveness of brief integrative couples counseling on emotional intimacy and marital quality of couples. *Contemporary Psychology, 10*(2), 29-40. https://bjcp.ir/browse.php?a_id=896&sid=1&slc_lang=en

Khosouei, M. S., Arizi Samani, H. R., & Aghaei, A. (2009). Development and validation of the humor questionnaire. *Psychological Research, 23*, 2–39. https://sid.ir/paper/66253/en

Lee, M., Kim, Y. S., & Lee, M. K. (2021). The mediating effect of marital intimacy on the relationship between spouse-related stress and prenatal depression in pregnant couples: An actor–partner interdependent model test. *International Journal of environmental research and public health, 18*(2), 487. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18020487

León-Pérez, J. M., Ortega, J., & Extremera, N. (2021). Effectiveness of a humor-based training for reducing psychological distress and enhancing employee well-being. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18*(21), 11177. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182111177

Lu, J., Wu, N., & Hu, S. (2024). Siam DCFF: Dynamic Cascade Feature Fusion for Vision Tracking. *Sensors (Basel, Switzerland), 24*(14), 4545. https://doi.org/10.3390/s24144545

Lavaf, H., Shokri, O., & Ghanbari, S. (2015). The mediating role of couples' communication patterns in the relationship between marital conflict and internalizing and externalizing problems in girls. Journal of Family Psychology, 1(2), 18–30. https://sid.ir/paper/250064/fa

Makhanova, A., McNulty, J. K., Eckel, L. A., Nikonva, L., Maner, J. K. (2018). Sex differences in testosterone reactivity during marital conflict. *Hormones and behavior, 105,* 7-22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yhbeh.2018.07.007

Martin, R. A. (2001). Sense of humor as a moderator of the relation between stressors and moods. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 45* (6), 1313-1324. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.45.6.1313

Martin, R. A. (2010). The psychology of humor: An integrative approach. Elsevier. Academic Press publications visit our.

McGee, E., & Shevlin, M. (2009). Effect of humor on interpersonal attraction and mate selection. *The Journal of Psychology, 143* (1). 67–77 https://doi.org/10.3200/JRLP.143.1.67-77

Mendes-Teixeira, A. I., & Duarte, C. (2021). Forgiveness and Marital Satisfaction: A Systematic Review. *Psicologia: Ciência e Profissã*o, 41, e200730, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1590/19823703003200730

Mirseifi Fard, S., Fatollahzadeh L. N., Rostami M., & Darbani A S. (2017). The Effectiveness of Humor Training on Social Phobia Symptoms. Developmental Psychology: *Iranian Psychologist, 14*(53), 75-85. https://www.magiran.com/paper/1779106/the-effectiveness-of-humor-training-on-social-phobia-symptoms?lang=en

Neumann, A. P., Wanger, A., & Remor, E. (2018). Couple relationship education program "Living as partners": Evaluation of effects on marital quality and conflict. Psicologia: *Reflexão e Crítica, 31*, 26. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41155-018-0106-z

Parsakia, K., Farzad, V., & Rostami, M. (2023). The mediating role of attachment styles in the

relationship between marital intimacy and self-differentiation in couples. *Applied Family Therapy Journal, 4*(1), 589-607. https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.aftj.4.1.29

Pratham Majumder, P., Dorai, R., Gopinathan, D., Pal, A., Mozumder, A., & Mallik, S. (2024). Balancing Acts: A Multi-Criteria Decision-Making Exploration of Psychological Factors in Marital Conflict and Intervention Strategies. *Research Square, 15*(5), 1-41. https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-3935051/v1

Rahimi, P., & Mousavi, A S. (2020). The effectiveness of emotion-focused education on sexual intimacy and interpersonal forgiveness of conflicting couples. *Journal of Psychological Science. 19*(86), 229-236. https://psychologicalscience.ir/browse.php?a_id=373&sid=1&slc_lang=en

Roberts, K., Jaurequi, M. E., Kimmes, J.G., Selice, L. (2021). Trait mindfulness and relationship satisfaction: The role of forgiveness among couples. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 47* (1), 196. 207. https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12440

Rye, M.S., Loiacono, D.M., Folck, C.D., Olszewski, B.T., Heim, T.A., & Madia, B.P. (2001). Evaluation of the psychometric properties of two forgiveness scales. *Current psychology, 20*(3), 260 -277. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1007/s12144 - 001 - 1011 - 6

Saffarian Tosi, M., Savabi, M., Khouei Nejad, G. (2018). The Role of Mediatory Factors of Hope and Forgiveness in Personality Traits' Effect on Marital Satisfaction of Couples on the Verge of Divorce. Positive Psychology Research, 4(2), 71-85. https://doi.org/10.22108/ppls.2018.112974.1523

Saroglou, V., Lacour, C., & Demeure, M.-E. (2010). Bad humor, bad marriage: Humor styles in divorced and married couples. *Europe's Journal of Psychology, 6* (3). 94–121. https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v6i3.210

Schaefer, M.T & Olson, D.H. (1981). Assessing intimacy: The pair inventory. *Journal of marital and family therapy. 7*, 47-60. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.1981.tb01351.x

Tawashi, Y., Tawashi, K., Beski, T., & Alhakeem, K. (2023). Exophthalmos and hemiheadache caused by osteoma in the greater wing of the sphenoid bone: an extremely rare case report. *Annals of medicine and surgery, 85*(5), 2052–2055. https://doi.org/10.1097/MS9.0000000000000504

Timofeiov-Tudose, I. G., & Măirean, C. (2023). Workplace humour, compassion, and professional quality of life among medical staff. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 14*(1), 2158533. https://doi.org/10.1080/20008066.2022.2158533

Ventura-León, J., Lino-Cruz, C., Tocto-Muñoz, S., Sánchez-Villena, A. R., Martínez-Munive, R., Talledo-Sánchez, K., & Casiano-Valdivieso, K. (2025). The scale of myths of romantic love: Evidence of validity and reliability of a brief scale in Peru. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 51*(1), e12741. https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12741

Waring, E. M., & Patton, D. (1984). Marital intimacy and depression. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 145*, 641-644. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.145.6.641

Wilbur C. J., Campbell L. (2011). Humor in romantic contexts: Do men participate and women evaluate? *Personality and Social*

*Psychology Bulletin, 37*(7), 918-29. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167211405343.

Yarigarravesh, M., & Hosseinizadeh, S. (2022). *Prediction of marital conflicts based on intimacy between couples.* 9th National Conference on Advances in Positive Psychology. https://civilica.com/doc/1641369

Yip, J. A., & Martin, R. A. (2006). Sense of humor, emotional intelligence, and social competence. *Journal of Research in Personality, 40*, 1202-1208. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2005.08.005

Yoo, H., Bartle-Haring, S., Day, R. D., & Gangamm, R. (2014). Couple Communication, Emotional and Sexual Intimacy, and Relationship Satisfaction. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy, 40*(4), 275-293. https://doi.org/10.1080/0092623X.2012.751072

Zandi Pour, T., Azadi, Sh., & Nahid Pour, F. (2011). Investigation of the relationship between personality traits, forgiveness, and mental health in couples referring to Gachsaran health centers. *Journal of Women's Sociology, 2*, 1–18. https://www.sid.ir/fa/journal/ViewPaper.aspx?id=18894 5

Zare Mirkabad, A., Ghorban Jahromi, R., Khademi Ashkzari, M., & Sheivandi Cholicheh, K. (2024). Codifying a Training Package of Islamic Happiness: Evaluating Its Efficacy on Marital Adjustment and Resilience in Couples with Marital Conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychological Research, 14*(4), 1-19. https://japr.ut.ac.ir/jufile?ar_sfile=1568250&lang=en

Zeigler-Hill V, Besser A. (2013). Laughing at the looking glass: Does humor style serve as an interpersonal signal? *Evolutionary Psychology, 11*, 201-26. https://doi.org/10.1177/147470491301100118.

Ziroglu, N., Balin, H., Ucan, V., Bozdag, E., Kapicioglu, M., & Bilsel, K. (2023). Three-Dimensional Finite Element Analysis of a Notched Insert Design for Reverse Total Shoulder Arthroplasty to Prevent Scapular Notching. *Indian journal of orthopaedics, 57*(11), 1874–1880. https://doi.org/10.1007/s43465-023-00975-7